

Conservatives who trust science more likely to view GMOs as safe than liberal counterparts, survey finds

[Editor's note: Dan Kahan is a professor of psychology at Yale Law School.]

[I]n 2010, the General Social Survey (GSS) asked this question:
Do you think that modifying the genes of certain crops is:

1. Extremely dangerous for the environment
2. Very dangerous
3. Somewhat dangerous
4. Not very dangerous
5. Not dangerous at all for the environment.

So I decided to see what would happen when one uses trust in science, as measured by the institutional confidence item, to predict responses to the genetically modified crops item. I also included a political orientation measure formed by aggregating responses to the GSS's 7-point liberal-conservative ideology item and its 7-point party orientation item.

In my analysis, I measured the probability that a respondent would select a response from 1-3—the ones that evince a perception of danger.

Here's what I found:

who fears no type unknown

Interesting!

I hadn't expected partisan identity to matter at all, given that surveys now typically find no meaningful correlation between attitudes toward GM foods and party identity. You can see, though, that there is a bit of a partisan effect here, with those [who] are right-leaning ideologically inclined to find *less* danger in GM crops as their "confidence" in the "scientific community" increases.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Trust in science & perceptions of GM food risks — does the GSS have something to say on this?](#)